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HVC Color Composer Pro

[September 26, 2006 Authors: Erik Vlietinck What are you adding to Photoshop with HVC Color Composer? The answer is: an enhanced version of Photoshop's colour picker that supports artists who rely on selecting colours by perception, better. HVC stands for Hue, Value and Chroma.](#)

[HVC Color Composer can be used as just another Photoshop colour picker, but it can also be used — and it is especially suitable for — creating colour palettes. These palettes should have colours that have a pleasant match — meaning they won't clash but complement each other.](#)

[Navigating the HVC space is an experience by itself. The colour picker not only has Lab, HSB, RGB, and CMYK radio buttons where you set the different values of the colour you want, but it also has the HVC buttons where you set colour values according to the HVC colour space.](#)

[Furthermore, the HVC colour picker has an option to show HVC colours in Munsell notation. Setting colours in one of the 'traditional' colour spaces is much the same as in Photoshop, except for the fact that you get two colour bars: one that remains static showing either hues or values, and another one next to it that shows the hues or range available given current value and chroma.](#)

[In the colour bar as well as the colour window, when you're working in the HVC space, grey areas show invalid hues. All of this looks quite complicated but when using the picker, it all makes sense.](#)

[HVC Color Composer Pro has a very powerful aid for creating colour compositions. It is the ability to make colour palettes directly from the picker, and with values that are within specific Contrast Ranges.](#)

[You can select to define the Contrast range yourself, or have the picker decide for you. You can also select to create palettes with colours that are in a specific proportion to each other. The latter involves selecting two colours and the desired proportion. The program will then automatically calculate all the values in between.](#)

[Palettes that you thus create can be saved as Photoshop swatches and be shown in the swatch palette for](#)

later use. You can decide to make a full palette, which contains all values within the range or proportion that you defined, or you can create a percentage of a palette, using a “Depth” setting of less than 100%.

It will be clear that using HVC Color Composer Pro is a playful experience. There is much to discover at first, and playing with all the buttons, sliders and possibilities is a lot of fun. But you don't buy HVC Color Composer for fun, but to get a better colour picker that supports colour selections in a more intuitive way than the traditional pickers.

I would say that HVC Color Composer Pro offers more than that. First of all, it will let you pick colours in a colour space — a colour ordering, so to speak — more or less the way humans perceive colour.

In contrast, Lab is a scientific ordering of colours of which the concept is very difficult to grasp, RGB is a device space — we don't ‘think’ in RGB — and so is CMYK. HSB comes closest to HVC but is less intuitive in that it will show completely unrelated colours, which HVC does not.

Personally, I was able to ‘discover’ colours that remained hidden when using other colour pickers. The reason is that HVC Color Composer Pro would only show me the colour values or hues and chromaticity for a given figure that I entered in one of the value boxes. This in turn allows you to find colours more quickly than with other pickers.

In addition, the HVC colour picker works with concepts that are well known to artists and photographers such as contrast range and proportional distance, and it has the functionality to save sets of colours that look pleasing together and can be applied efficiently and without guess work to design elements in a project.

I therefore consider HVC Color Composer Pro certainly worth its 120.00 Euros.

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